

Event website: <http://csis.org/event/statesmens-forum-border-security-21st-century>

DHS readout and slides: <http://www.dhs.gov/news/2014/10/09/remarks-secretary-homeland-security-jeh-johnson-border-security-21st-century>

Summary:

Overall, Secretary Johnson did not address the issues of great importance to us in any significant depth, nor did he say anything that is likely to break national headlines. One common theme over the course of the talk was the need for greater programmatic integration in DHS, which would involve employing the resources of separate departmental agencies in a more coordinated and integrated way. He described the utilization of three 'joint task forces' designed to secure the southern border, consisting of JTF West, JTF East, and JTF Investigations. One attendee asked a question regarding the use of biometric technologies with regard to U.S. entry and exit programs. The secretary referred to these programs as the "gold standards," but noted that insufficient appropriations from Congress have left them as unfunded mandates that cannot be fully implemented without additional funds.

Lecture Content:

- The lecture began with an overview of the history of border patrol and enforcement practices in the United States.
- Secretary Johnson moved on to a description of current practices and recited figures measuring manpower, equipment, and infrastructure resources currently employed, compared to ten years ago.
 - All the figures demonstrated a significant increase in resources over the past decade:
 - "Today the Border Patrol has the largest deployment of people, vehicles, aircraft, boats and equipment along the southwest border in its 90-year history."
- Secretary Johnson outlined a three-part solution to tackle southern border issues:
 - First, he articulated the need for a "risk-based strategy" that would focus on areas with the highest influx of migrants. He maintained that simply "building more fences" across the entire border would not be an effective solution.
 - Second, he articulated a "**a common, department-wide southern border campaign plan**" that would integrate the resources of various DHS Departments, including Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Coast Guard, and other DHS components. The plan envisions three "joint task forces" that will execute an integrated strategy along the southern border.
 - **JTF East** is responsible for enforcing the border from Florida to Eastern Texas.
 - **JTF West** is responsible for enforcing the border from Eastern Texas to California.
 - **JTF Investigations** is responsible for supporting the two regional JTFs.

- Third, he articulated the need for greater transparency across the department. He noted that the Department will be hiring new statisticians to analyze and evaluate data and increase transparency.
- The Secretary spoke about the need to reduce agency stovepipes with respect to budgetary issues. The budgets should be integrated and viewed as accomplishing specific departmental goals.
- One attendee asked a question specifically about **biometric technologies** with regard to U.S. entry and exit programs. The secretary referred to these programs as “gold standards,” but noted that insufficient appropriations from Congress have left them as unfunded mandates that cannot be fully implemented without additional appropriations.
- In response to a question about ISIS, Secretary Johnson maintained that the Administration is committed to bringing the fight to the enemy. He stated that he has a “reasonable degree of comfort” that the Administration is doing what it needs to in order to prevent foreign fighters from carrying out attacks in the United States.
- Secretary Johnson announced enhanced screening of air passenger for Ebola, and noted that DHS is heavily engaged with DOD and the CDC in order to prevent further cases from developing in the United States.